

DRESDEN AND PIRNA

...Dresden is one of the smaller cities, fortified with art and regularity, and very well arranged. Its houses are high and substantial, the streets broad and straight, well-paved, clean, and well-lit at night. There are great squares in it, and the whole city is so well laid out that Dresden may be ranked among the finest in the world. The Elbe divides it into two parts, old and new Dresden, which are joined together by a bridge of stone. In order to give you a more precise idea of this city, I shall point out to you such things as I took most notice of. I shall begin with old Dresden, because it is the first we come to from Meissen. At the entrance to the town, on the right hand, there is a great building called the Palace of the Indies and of Holland, which the King bought some years ago from his Prime Minister, the Marshal Count Flemming... This magnificent palace has a garden surrounding it from whence can be enjoyed a fine view of the Elbe... It is adorned with statues of white marble which the King caused to be purchased in Rome. Near the Palace of the Indies stands that of the Cadets...

...Dresden is one of the finest towns in Germany for its situation and its structures; it is the capital of Misnia, in Upper Saxony. Charlemagne was the first to fortify it; it has been for a long time the ordinary residence of the Dukes and Electors of Saxony, who have caused its fortifications to be considerably augmented, and it is now a very strong place. The Prince's palace is in the old city; it was formerly a very fine building, but only a part of it remains, the rest having been destroyed by a fire. That part which still stands contains very fine apartments which the King has had adapted to modern taste, and they are very nobly furnished. Near the King's palace there is a fine garden called the Zwingergarten, which is surrounded by magnificent buildings in a horseshoe shape, with arcades above which runs an open gallery uniting three pavilions. In the centre one of these, on a level with the garden, there is a fine grotto. The upper storey contains a very beautiful salon, decorated with marble and with gilded decoration. The ceiling is superb, the windows have very fine glass. The rest of the building is of equal magnificence, but perhaps a little too much encumbered with sculpture.

Next to the garden there is nothing finer to be seen than the King's stables and riding-school. Over the stables there are very fine large rooms in which is kept all the furniture and trappings for the horses. In the same quarter there are also a number of stately buildings which render old Dresden a very agreeable place. The streets are broad, most of them well-paved and very clean. The old town is joined to the new by a beautiful stone bridge. The first thing one meets with entering the new Dresden is a building that belongs to the King, the palace of Holland, because all the china ware and furniture with which it is adorned come from that place. The gardens are very pleasant, and its situation most charming by reason of the river Elbe, which runs just by it.

Lettres et mémoires, London, 1747.

CHARLES LOUIS POLLNITZ
August 1729

...Dresden has long been famous for its superb palaces, straight and uniform streets, and splendid court; but in number of houses and inhabitants it must yield to several cities in Germany.

...Besides the gallery and apartments already described, the Zwinger house contains several saloons and other apartments which belong to the electoral family. The most elegant of

these is that called the ballroom. And indeed the gilding, painting and fine marble ornaments to be seen in this room, are very suitable to a place of festivity. In the pavement are two large oval pieces of marble, about six Dresden ells in the longest diameter; and between these is another piece of red and white marble cut out of a single block, which is four ells broad and eleven or twelve common paces in length... This saloon opens into fine walks made on the ramparts; from which one has a view of several boats, and the royal yacht called the *Bucentaurus*, in which her royal highness the electoral princess in the year 1719, sailed up the Elbe from Pirna to Dresden. On each side of this ballroom are several fine water-works, cascades, grottos, and baths... The garden is laid out in square form, each side of which is 2,600 common paces in length. The stables, which were repaired in 1729 with the addition of a second story, which may properly be called the old treasury, are full of such ornaments as are used to decorate the royal apartments on public days, rich habits, with the arms and furniture of foreign nations.

The bridge over the Elbe, which joins the old to new Dresden, has been lately enlarged and repaired, with so many additional ornaments, that it may be said to be the finest in all Europe. I speak of bridges over large rivers; and indeed many elegant small bridges, such as that over the Tiber near the castle of St. Angelo at Rome, cannot come in competition with it. The length of this building is 685 common paces, and the breadth 16 or 17 such paces, including the raised foot-way on both sides. There are several round projections with seats in them on each side of the bridge, and a fine iron balustrade all along. On the fifth pilaster on the right hand, in coming from the new city to the old, the arms of Poland and Saxony are neatly cut in stone; they are supported by two statues representing Poland and Saxony...

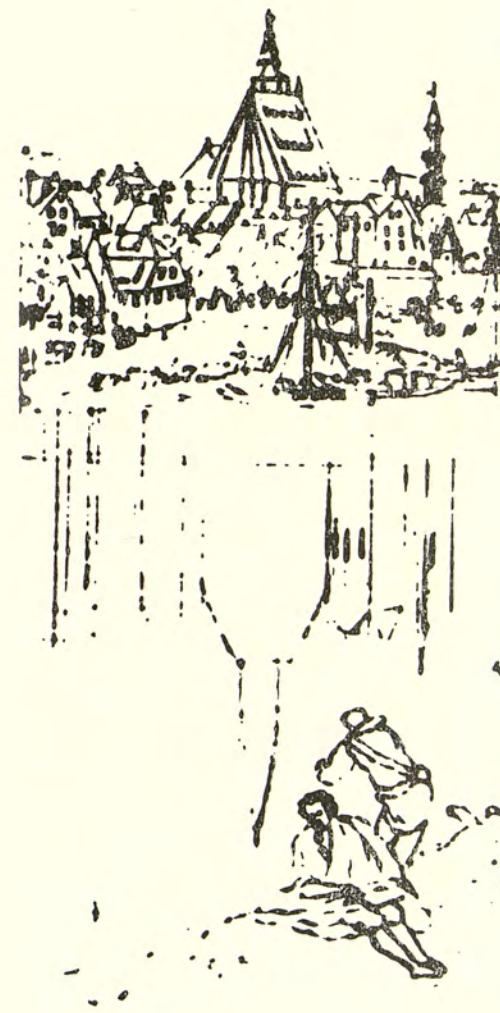
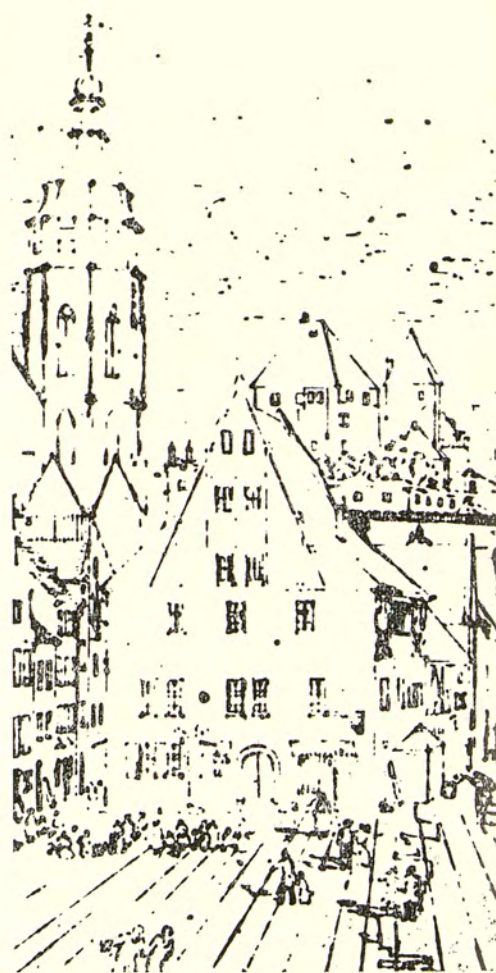
For the more convenient intercourse between the towns, a new gate has been built on the new Dresden side, near the old one; and carriages going toward the old town pass through the old gate, keeping on to the right-hand side of the bridge; and all that come towards new Dresden keep on the other side, and pass thro' the new gate. By observing this rule all stoppages and quarrels are prevented. This bridge consists of nineteen arches; and over every pier are four pedestals, with a stone urn on every pedestal. It is also very beautifully illuminated at night.

Travels through Germany, Bobemia, Hungary,... London, 1756.

JOHN GEORGE KEYSLER
October 1730

...The 17th. I reached Dresden, which is only fifteen miles from Meissen, through the most beautiful line of country I have seen in Germany; it is all hill and dale, corn, vines and meadows along the banks of the Elbe, a continued picture; the river is every where seen to advantage, with the beautiful circumstance of the banks being high and woody; a more entertaining picturesque scene can hardly be viewed.

Dresden I easily conceive, was before the destruction of the suburbs, one of the finest cities in Europe; but the Prussians have much reduced the beauty by burning down a great part of the most beautiful quarters of it. The old city is fortified in a regular manner; the bastions are of stone; and there is a double ditch, but yet the strength of it is nothing, unless the garrison be very numerous: The river Elbe divides it into two cities, the old and the new. The bridge over that river, which is built of stone, is reckoned the finest in Germany, but no person who has seen that at Westminster will think there is either beauty or magni-



ficence in it. It is 540 feet long, 36 broad and consists of 19 arches. The electoral palace is not a very striking building for the beauty of architecture, but there are many fine and spacious apartments in it, very splendidly furnished.

The Romish chappel is one of the finest edifices at Dresden; it is a well-proportioned and magnificent building, most highly ornamented: It was built for the private use of the late King and his court.

...The chamber of curiosities has yet a great many very beautiful models and toys, which cannot fail entertaining any traveller; and the collection which they call the *Kunstkammer*, which is chiefly of natural rarities, equal to anything I have seen... The gallery of pictures is equal to most that are to be seen in Italy, and are kept in admirable preservation... The Indian palace, of which several writers have given long accounts, is in my opinion a very silly affair; and by no means even elegant. Count Brühl's famous palace suffered most severely in the war... The picture gallery is one of the finest rooms I have any where seen.

...The 12th I set out from Dresden, and got to Lentmeritz in Bohemia, in two days, passing through Pirna and by the famous castle of Koningstein. Pirna is a little place among the mountains, and Koningstein is a castle situated on the top of a rock, three hundred feet high, and half a mile in circumference... The country is in general very wild and romantic, and the views of the Elbe running through such a region of mountains extremely grotesque. There are some vineyards planted upon southern spots of these mountains, where the grapes ripen tolerably, but the wine is not drinkable to those who have been used to that which is good.

Travels through Holland, Flanders, Germany... in the years 1768, 1769, 1770, London, 1772-6.

JOSEPH MARSHALL
June-July 1770

...The country of Saxony is very beautiful, the city of Dresden very pretty, and the court one of the most amiable in Germany; strangers no where receive greater civilities: the women are mild, lively, and witty; the climate is fine; the environs pleasant; the fare delicious: it is indeed a charming country, and the Saxons would be too happy if they had not a hero for their neighbour. Ah! dreadful is the neighbourhood of a hero or a volcano! The situation of Dresden resembles that of Portici; and the inhabitants tremble at a menace of Frederick, like those of Portici at a rumbling of Vesuvius. An old woman spoke to me of the bombardment of the city in the last war, with the same horror of recollection, and almost in the same terms, as an old man of Portici spoke to me of the terrible eruption in 1768. Travellers in general make too short a stay at Dresden, and they are in the wrong. It is a country highly interesting to all who are fond of natural history, pictures, and the beauties of nature of every kind. If the Prussians are the Macedonians of Germany, the Saxons are its Athenians. I have scarcely seen a country where there is more taste, or more cheerful and agreeable society.

Letters from an English Traveller, London, 1778.

MARTIN SHERLOCK
1778

...Dresden is a delightful city. Situated in a plain, it is surrounded, at a distance of two or

three miles, by low hills, like the ring of Saturn, which reflect the rays of the sun and shelter it from the winds, so that the climate there is less severe than elsewhere in the vicinity. Vines grow and wine is made in this area around the city, although further south, towards Bohemia, the vines cannot withstand the harshness of winter. The wines commonly drunk here, however, are Rhenish wines, and they are excellent. Here also you may have sea fish, and oysters from the ocean into which flows the Elbe, which is like the Adda. This river divides the city into two parts which are united by a fine bridge, not a heavy construction such as the Germans usually build. The Catholic church, which belongs to the court, is beautiful. The city church, which is Protestant, is like S. Lorenzo in Milan. The houses are almost all solidly built of stone; they are well-furnished, and everything suggests a civilized nation. If you go into a shop to spend your money in Vienna, you are received as a nuisance, or worse: here the inhabitants are extremely solicitous, extremely polite, and although it is a law of nature that foreigners should be gulled, here at least one is gulled with civility and a good manner.

Carteggio di Pietro e di Alessandro Verri dal 1766 al 1797, Milan, 1923.

ALESSANDRO VERRI

...Dresden, though not one of the largest, is certainly one of the most agreeable cities in Germany, whether we consider its situation, the magnificence of its palaces, or the beauty and conveniency of the houses and streets. This city is built on both sides of the Elbe, which is of a considerable breadth here. The magnificent and commodious manner in which the opposite parts of the town are joined adds greatly to its beauty.

There is an equestrian statue of King Augustus, in a kind of open place or square, between the old city and the new. The workmanship is but indifferent; however, I was desired by our Cicerone to admire this very much, because — it was made by a common smith. I begged to be excused, telling him that I could not admire it, had it been made by Michael Angelo. Few princes in Europe are so magnificently housed as the Elector of Saxony. The Palace and Museum have often been described... I will not enumerate the prodigious number of curiosities, natural and artificial, to be seen there. The picture gallery is famous. Several volumes would be needed to enumerate the individual merits of all the paintings to be seen there, and a greater knowledge of art would be necessary to appreciate them at their true worth. Many of the houses still lie in rubbish; but the inhabitants are gradually rebuilding, and probably all the ruined streets will be repaired before a new war breaks out in Germany.

A View of Society and Manners in France, Switzerland and Germany, London, 1779.

JOHN MOORE

1779

...Dresden is not such an out-of-the-way place that I need to describe it. I can tell you that great is the cleanliness here, and no less the splendour of the court. And I know that the erudite eyes of Milady could find here much food for thought, to see the precious enamels, the many fine diamonds which shine in the treasury of the King; the beautiful porcelain from Japan, from China, and the local ware, preserved in a palace called Holland, which is one day to be covered with porcelain tiles, as are some buildings in China.

Opere scelte, Milan, 1823.

FRANCESCO ALGAROTTI

1739

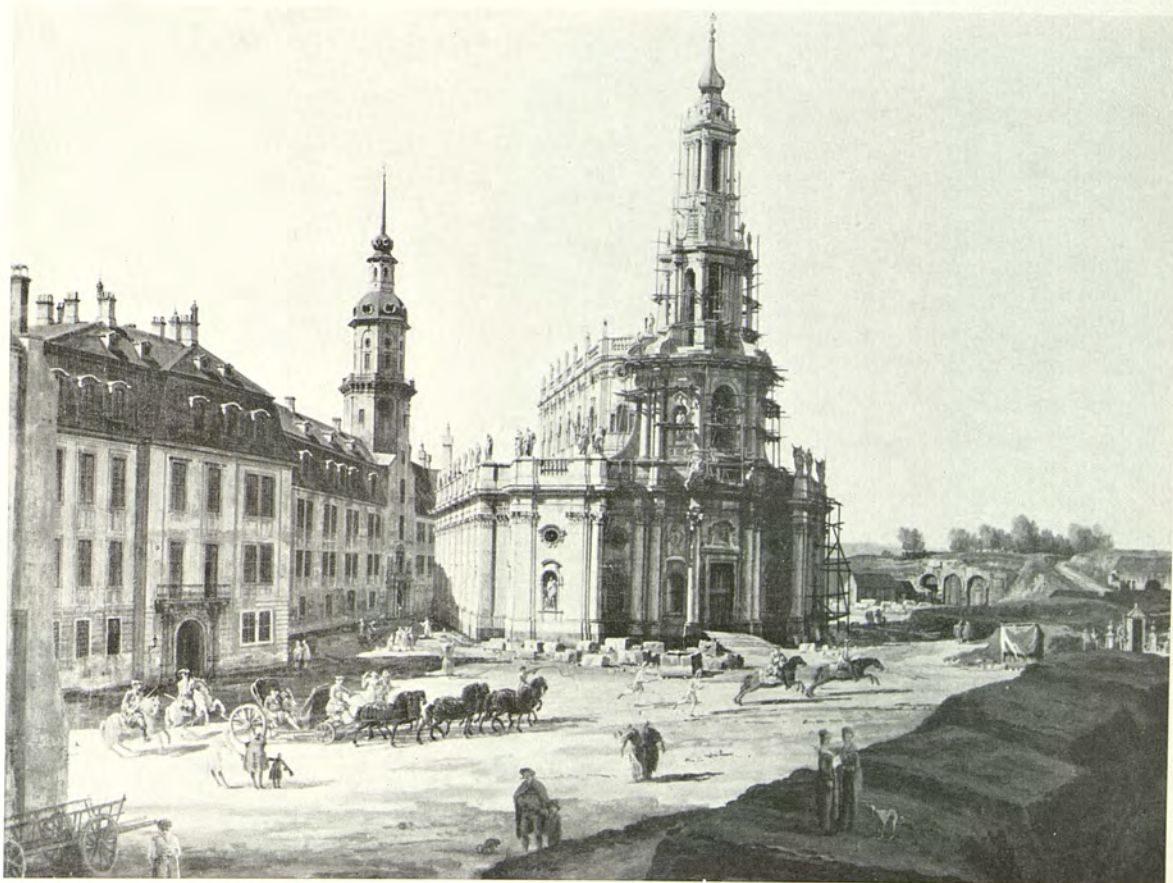
147. BERNARDO BELLOTTO:
View of Dresden (detail). Dresden,
Gemäldegalerie.

The view from the Japanese Palace looking over the Elbe to the old city (Altstadt). It shows the Augustusbrücke and the dome of the Frauenkirche on the left and the Hofkirche on the river, with the unfinished tower by Chiaveri. Bellotto painted this view in 1748.



148. BERNARDO BELLOTTO:
View of Dresden (detail). Dresden,
Gemäldegalerie.

A view from the left bank of the Elbe showing the Hofkirche in the centre with the tower scaffolding still in place. On the left, beside the church, is the Royal Palace, which was rebuilt in 1717-19. The tower of the old sixteenth-century building remains, which dates from 1534. This painting also is of 1748.





149. BERNARDO BELLOTTO:
View of Dresden. Dresden, Gemäldegalerie.

A view from the left bank of the river just outside the city. The Neustadt is on the left, the Augustusbrücke and the Hofkirche can be seen on the right.



150. BERNARDO BELLOTTO:
The Neumarkt, Dresden, from the Moritzstrasse. Dresden, Gemäldegalerie.

On the right is the dome of the Frauenkirche and in front of it the Guardhouse by Fesch. On the left are the twin gables of the warehouse built in 1591-2 by Paul Buchner, with stalls for butchers and shoemakers. Both the warehouse and the Guardhouse were demolished in 1791. On the right in the foreground is the so-called Turkish Fountain.

151. BERNARDO BELLOTTO:
The Courtyard of the Zwinger, Dresden (detail). Dresden, Gemäldegalerie.

The view is from the Wallpavillon looking towards the city. In the centre is the Stadtpavillon which was joined, by galleries and arches, to the Deutscher Pavillon on the left and to the Zoologischer Pavillon on the right.





◁ 152-153. BERNARDO BELLOTTO:
The old Fortifications of Dresden
(view and detail). Dresden,
Gemäldegalerie.

The view from the south-west, close to Annengasse, looking towards the old fortifications. On the right is the Saturnbastei. The bridge over the moat leads to the Wilsches Tor, to the left of which can be seen the Adamisches Haus (1744). On the left in the distance is the Opernhaus built by Pöppelmann in 1719, behind which rise the towers of the Royal Palace and the Hofkirche. On the left in the foreground workmen are building a house and on the road beside the river is a milepost (1726).



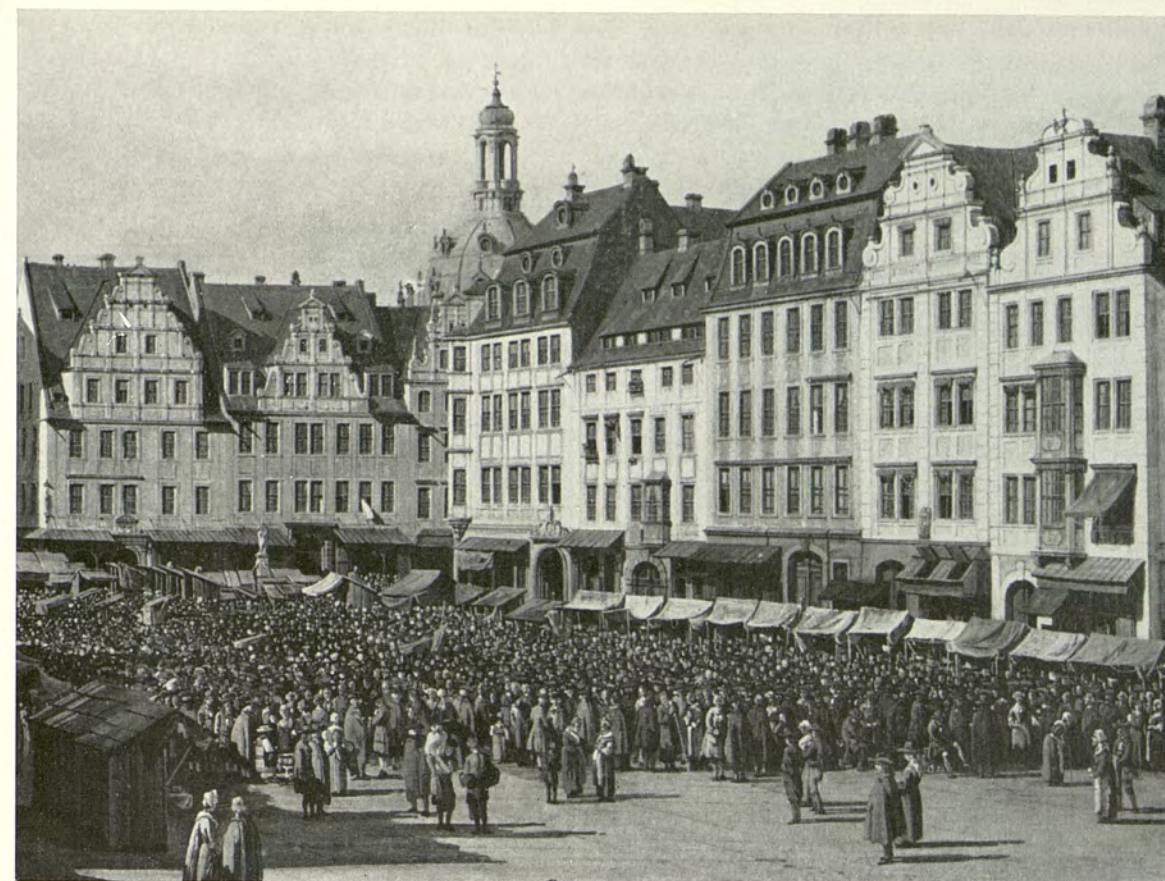
154. BERNARDO BELLOTTO:
The Marketplace, Pirna (detail).
Dresden, Gemäldegalerie.

The marketplace is overlooked by the Rathaus. The tower above the east gable was built in 1718 to replace one which had fallen into ruin. Behind the Rathaus is the Marienkirche, dating from the first half of the sixteenth century. The older, south-west, tower was begun in 1466. The baroque style of the belltower is very evident. Opposite the viewer is the so-called 'house of Canaletto'; the gable of the front is not the original construction of 1520.



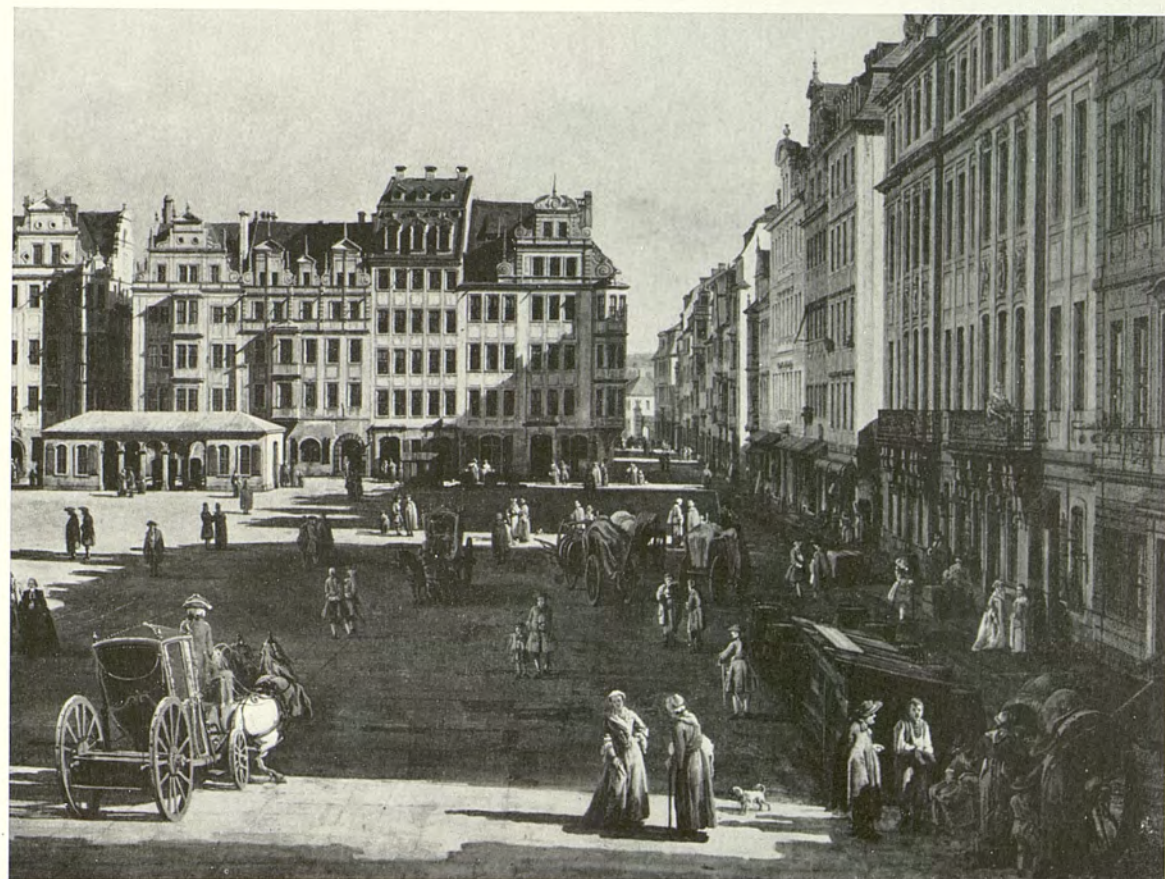
◁ 155, 157. BERNARDO BELLOTTO:
*The Altmarkt, Dresden, from See-
strasse (view and detail).* Dresden,
Gemäldegalerie.

On the left of the vast Altmarkt is the Goldener Ring, the inn in which Peter the Great stayed. The street which leads away from the square in the background to the left is Schlosstrasse, at the end of which can be seen the Hofkirche. On the right, behind the corner of the square, the lantern of the Frauenkirche rises above the roofs of the houses. The low building in the right foreground is the Portechaisenhaus, and behind it is the oldest house in Dresden, the Marienapotheke, built before 1491. The crowd of people in the square are attending the weekly market.



◁ 156, 158. BERNARDO BELLOTTO:
*The Altmarkt, Dresden, from
Schlosstrasse (view and detail).*
Dresden, Gemäldegalerie.

The view is dominated by the Kreuzkirche on the left, with the tower built between 1579 and 1584. Seestrasse, on the right, leads into the distance. On the left in the foreground is the Fountain of Justice by Christoph Walther (1653) which was demolished in 1888. On the right, the west side of the old market, is the Municipal Palace, designed by Fehre and Knöffel, built in 1741-4. The Altmarkt, reconstructed after its destruction by bombing on 13 February 1945, adheres in its dimensions to the original plan of the square.



159. BERNARDO BELLOTTO: *The old Kreuzkirche, Dresden*. Dresden, Gemäldegalerie.

The old Kreuzkirche from the east. The medieval church was destroyed by fire in 1491 and rebuilding was begun at once. In 1584 the two-storied bell-chamber and the two-storied tower were erected on the ruins of the old tower. Above the bell-chamber can be seen pieces of artillery. In 1589 the sculptor Christoph Walther III decorated the doorway with statues and other ornamentation. In the background on the left is Kreuzgasse, and right of centre is the corner of Weissestrasse and the Witzthum-Rutowski Palace built by Pöppelmann in 1719. The painting was executed before 1754.



160. BERNARDO BELLOTTO: *The Ruins of the old Kreuzkirche* (detail). Dresden, Gemäldegalerie.

The painting is dominated by the ruins of the Kreuzkirche, whose choir and nave were destroyed by Prussian artillery fire in 1760, leaving intact the lower part of the tower. It was decided to rebuild the church in 1764, but in the following year the east part of the tower was destroyed. Bellotto shows in this view the pile of rubble during the strenuous work of demolition. The painting is signed and dated 1765.



161. BERNARDO BELLOTTO: *The Frauenkirche, Dresden (detail)*. Dresden, Gemäldegalerie.

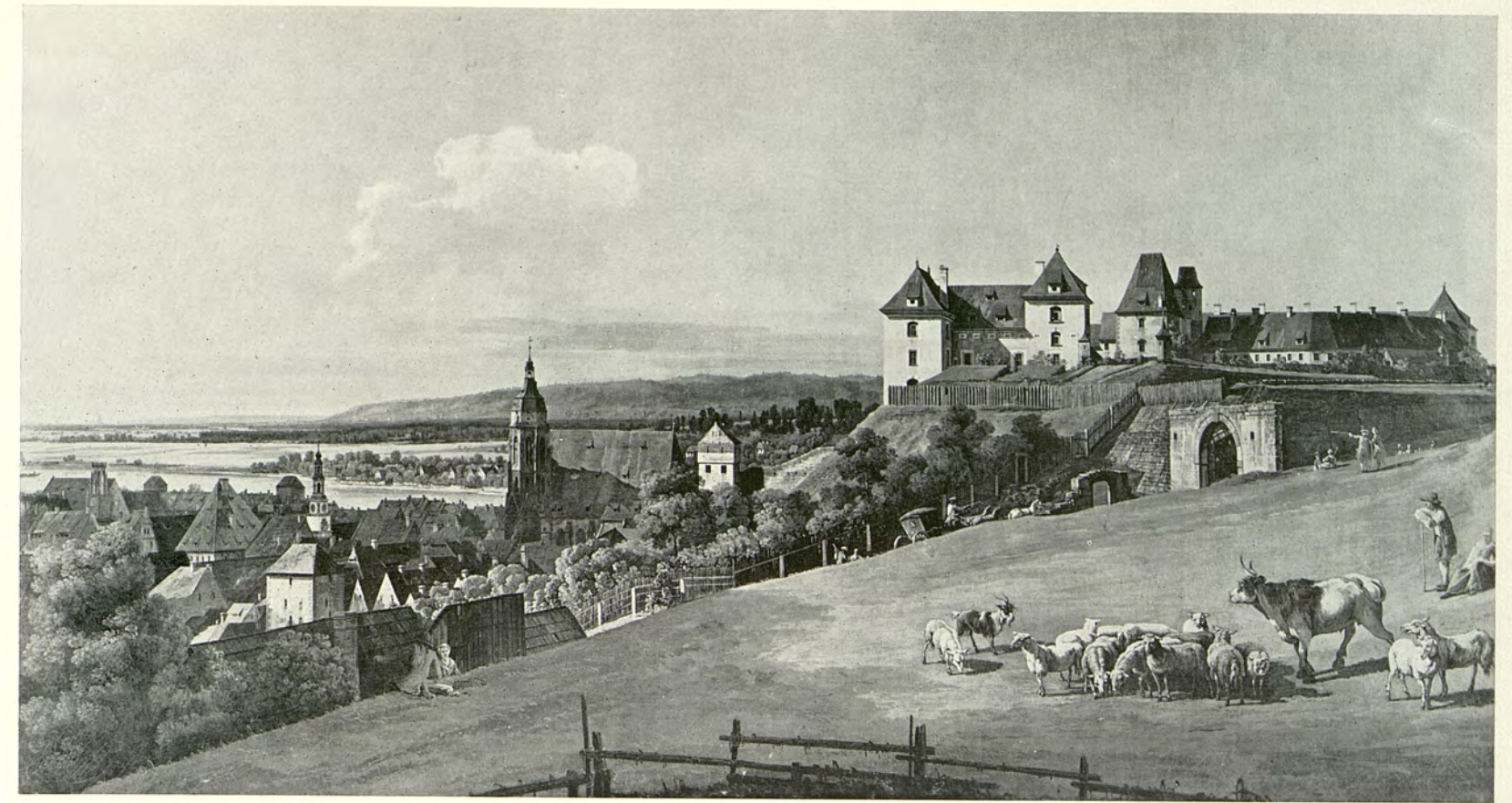
The view from beside the Frauenkirche, which can be seen on the left. In the distance can be seen the Curlandia Palace, at the end of the Rampische Strasse, built by Knöffel in 1729. In the centre, beyond the Frauenkirche, is the Haus zur Glocke, built by Georg Bähr in 1711. In the right foreground is a group of choirboys from the Kreuzkirche. The painting was executed before 1754.

162. BERNARDO BELLOTTO: *The Sonnenstein Fortress near Pirna*. Dresden, Gemäldegalerie.

The view from the hills on the left bank of the Elbe near the fortress of Sonnenstein, which can be seen on the right. Pirna is hidden in the valley below, among the trees above which rises the Marienkirche. The wide view over the valley of the Elbe shows the towers of Dresden on the horizon. This canvas, like the other paintings of Pirna, was executed before 1755.

163. BERNARDO BELLOTTO: *Pirna seen from Posta*. Dresden, Gemäldegalerie.

The town of Pirna, about 15 kilometres south-west of Dresden, is shown from the village of Posta, on the right bank of the Elbe. On the left the fortress of Sonnenstein on its hill dominates the town, and at the foot of the hill is a village of boatmen. Among the buildings of Pirna stand out the Marienkirche and the tower of the Rathaus.



164. BERNARDO BELLOTTO: *Pirna, the boatmen's village* (detail). Dresden, Gemäldegalerie.

Painted between 1752 and 1755, the view shows the village of boatmen's houses outside the gate to which it gives its name, at the foot of the fortress. In the foreground is a little landing-place.

165-166. BERNARDO BELLOTTO: *Pirna from Kopitz* (view and detail). Dresden, Gemäldegalerie.

Pirna and the Sonnenstein fortress from the right bank of the Elbe near the suburb of Kopitz. The tower of the fortifications and the Krone can be seen in the town, behind them the pitched roof of the monastery, a fourteenth-century building, and to the left of the Krone is the tower of the Elbe Gate. The view was painted between 1752 and 1755.



167. BERNARDO BELLOTTO: *Pirna from the vineyards near Posta* (detail). Dresden, Gemäldegalerie.

A detail from a general view of Pirna and the Elbe near the town, showing the boatmen's village and part of the town dominated by the Marienkirche and the tower of the Rathaus. Painted between 1752 and 1755.

168-169. BERNARDO BELLOTTO: *Pirna from the West* (view and detail). Dresden, Gemäldegalerie.

A view of the town from the west, showing the Dohnaisches Tor on the main road, to the left; the stone parapet surrounds the fortifications. Beyond the wall, among the trees, lies the town with its characteristic towers, and on the right, in full light, is the Sonnenstein fortress with the Kemnate to the left and the military headquarters to the right. The painting is of 1752-5.



170-171. BERNARDO BELLOTTO: *The Breitegasse, Pirna* (view and detail). Dresden, Gemäldegalerie.

The view shows part of the Breitegasse outside the fortifications of the town, leading to the Dohnaisches Tor. On the right are the Sonnenstein fortress and the Marienkirche, in the left foreground is an obelisk milestone. This painting was executed between 1752 and 1755.

